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ON SOME CONCEPTIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PSALTER*

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Though the poems of the Psalter were edited and collected doubtless for liturgical purposes, both poets and collectors allow themselves considerable freedom in choice of material. The majority of the hymns deal with the experiences, painful or pleasant, of the nation or of individuals. But not a few are merely reflective; and on some fundamental points contradictory opinions are expressed by different writers. This is natural in a community as large as that which produced the psalms, and in a transition period when different men would be affected in different degrees and in different ways by the new ideas that were coming into vogue. Even if the psalmists were all Palestinians (which is probable, though not certain), there would be diversities in their points of view; and, in the absence of any history of the Jewish culture of the later pre-Christian centuries, the Psalter gives welcome hints regarding the ideas of the time.

§ 1

Some points in the attitude of the book toward the sacrificial cult are worthy of notice. In general, as has often been remarked, little prominence is given to this cult. A few times sacrifices

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are mentioned approvingly as a part of the current worship: 4:6 (men are urged to offer right, that is, ritually correct and ethically pure, sacrifices); 20:4 (hope that Yahweh will remember the king's cereal offerings and holocausts, and grant him victory over his enemies); 26:6 (reference to the ceremonial procession around the altar, in connection with some thanksgiving sacrifice); 27:6 (a service of praise); 51:21 (holocausts promised in joyful recognition of God's goodness in building the walls of Jerusalem); 54:8 (free-will or willing offering with thanks for rescue from enemies); 56:13 (the same); 66:13, 15 (holocausts as thank-offerings); 107:22 (exhortation to men to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving for rescue from danger—possibly here thanksgiving itself is thought of as a sacrifice¹); 116:13 (apparently some sort of offering is involved, but the expression כֹּס יְשׁוּעָה is doubtful; it hardly refers to a libation, for which the verb אָשַׁא 'lift' is not appropriate; possibly to some late ceremony not mentioned elsewhere, a solemn raising of a cup, in commemoration of deliverances at a sacrificial meal; it is, perhaps, a current expression = "I will make acknowledgment of rescue;" Graetz's נָס for כֹּס is improbable); 116:17 (as in 107:22). Mention of vows occurs in 56:13; 61:6, 9; 65:2; 66:13; 76:12; 116:14, 18 (cf. Eccl. 5:4); the expression of joy in the temple as the special abode of God is found in 27:4; 84; 96:8, 9 (exhortation to all nations to offer homage in the temple); 138:2; with special regard to priests, in 132:9, 16; 134; 135:1, 2; festivals, which were occasions of sacrifice, are spoken of with longing or enthusiasm in 42:5; 81:3 f.,² and the pilgrim-psalms attest the devotion of distant Jews to the central spot of their cult. There is, probably, no reference to sacrifice in 22:27, 30,³ and the text of 118:27 (where Eng. vers. has "bind the sacrifice with cords," etc.) is in disorder.⁴ The passages cited above show that there was a general hearty delight in the sacrificial ritual as the symbol of God's presence and protecting care. Nothing is said of an expiatory efficacy in the offerings; the specific sin-offering is mentioned only once (40:7), and then only to be rejected;⁵ it

¹ And so, perhaps, 50:14, 23.

² See note 1, p. 5.

³ See note 2, p. 7.

⁴ See note 3, p. 8.

⁵ See note 4, p. 11.

appears to be the temple around which the hopes and aspirations of the psalmists cluster—the temple as the locus of divine glory and kindness, the sacrifice being felt to be rather the traditional and necessary accompaniment of worship. On the other hand, we find expressions of indifference or antagonism to the sacrificial ritual. Some of the psalmists appear to live in a religious atmosphere almost completely divorced from priestly ceremonies: in the temple what they think of is God's graciousness (48:10), and the conditions of taking part in the service of Yahweh and sharing its blessedness are purely ethical (15; 24; 101). Besides the passages referred to above (107:22; 116:17; 50:14, 23), in which thanksgiving may be regarded as itself a sacrifice, prayer is identified in 141:2 with incense and the evening oblation. In several passages sacrifice is frankly dismissed as without efficacy or divine authority: 40:7 (God takes no delight in זבח and מנחה, and does not require עולה and חטאה);⁶ 50:8–15 (Israel cannot be charged with neglect of the ritual, but God does not desire their bullocks and goats, does not need animal flesh for food, rather asks for thankfulness and the payment of vows);⁷ 51:18 f. (God requires not זבח and עולה, but a spirit of humble dependence on him); 69:31 f. (praise and thanksgiving are more acceptable to Yahweh than oxen and bullocks). This unfriendly attitude toward the sacrificial ritual seems at first sight to be identical with that of certain prophetic passages that run from Amos to Jeremiah (Am. 5:21–24; Hos. 6:6; Isa. 1:11–17; Mic. 6:6–8; I Sam. 15:22; Jer. 7:21–23) and are commonly cited in illustration of the psalmists' point of view. And certainly, so far as regards the conviction of the futility of sacrifices in themselves, the two groups of passages are identical, and it is quite possible that the later writers had the earlier in mind. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the conceptions of the two groups. Down to the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans there was no official announcement of the divine authority of the sacrificial ritual—it was the traditional form of worship, and had only the authority of custom, so that Jeremiah could say simply that Yahweh had not commanded it. The prophets, as moralists,

⁶ See note 4, p. 11

⁷ See note 5, p. 12.

were naturally offended by the superficial and non-moral character of the current worship, and in their sweeping, indiscriminating fashion denounced the whole procedure as an insult to the deity, though there is no reason to doubt that there was much simple, honest, though crude, devotion in the sacrificial routine of the people. The intellectual atmosphere of the Psalter is different. In the time of the prophets the popular creed was frankly and naively polytheistic, and a part of their indignation came from the foreign coloring of the popular cult; in the psalms monotheism (of an impure form) is the accepted faith; the attitude toward worship of foreign deities is one, not of fierce anger (as in the prophetic writings), but rather of contempt, and hostility to the ritual is not based on the corruption in foreign cults. The divine authority of the ritual is not questioned; the author of Ps. 50 (certainly a late production) speaks of it with good-natured tolerance, while he professes himself indifferent to it. The tone of the psalm passages cited above is one rather of philosophical reflection than of religious indignation. The summary in Mic. 6:6-8 is a passionate ethical protest; the argument of Ps. 50:9-15 is an exposition of the absurdity of supposing that God needed animal food—perhaps a rebuke of an existing opinion, perhaps intended as a *reductio ad absurdum*, as if the writer would say: “the only conceivable ground for animal sacrifice is such an opinion, which is manifestly absurd.” The reflective tone, with indifference to the sacrificial ritual, these psalmists have in common with the sages (Proverbs, Ben-Sira, Koheleth, Wisdom of Solomon, *al.*). The decadence of trust in sacrifice, while a deep religious spirit existed, led to the suggestion of substitutes for it. The prophets demanded a moral life, not as a substitute for sacrifice, but as being in itself the essence of loyalty to Yahweh; later writers, not rejecting the ritual, recognized as its equivalents prayer, gratitude, penitence, almsgiving (Ben-Sira 7:9; 35[32]: 1 f.; Dan. 4:27; Tobit 4:7-11; 12:8 f.; cf. Judith 16:16). In seeking for the causes of this movement, the limited range of the Jewish sacrificial system must be borne in mind. It was never a universal atonement—it dealt with inadvertencies and physical impurities; it did not touch the deeper religious expe-

rience, and the better thinkers recognized its insufficiency as a means of reconciliation with God. This inadequacy was, of course, not peculiar to the Jewish cult—it attached to all cults, being inherent in the nature of sacrifice, which has its origin in the crude beginnings of religion. In the popular worship it was commercial, selfishly utilitarian, a *quid pro quo* to the deity, and, because of this element of bargaining, was repugnant to finer natures. This repugnance shows itself among the Greeks as well as among the Hebrews; in the four centuries preceding the beginning of our era there was a general movement, in the western world, of protest against sacrifice and of withdrawal from it.⁸ While this movement had its roots in human nature, and was therefore a natural Jewish growth, it was doubtless helped by the foreign thought with which the Jews came into contact. In the Psalter the conception of sacrifice is purified into an expression of thankfulness, and its place is largely taken by worship. The commercial feature of worship is not lacking. Yahweh is praised for his intervention in national and individual affairs, or is besought to intervene; the author of Ps. 116 expresses the general attitude of most of the psalmists when he says: “I love Yahweh because he has heard my prayer.” This attitude, however, does not exclude a sense of ethical dependence on God and the desire of ethical union with him. The moral standard of the psalms is admittedly good, except in the passionate demand for vengeance on enemies (a result of the excited social relations of the time). The conception of God as the ethical ideal and the aspiration after ethical purity for its own sake appear in certain of the psalms, especially in Pss. 51 and 119.

NOTES

NOTE 1. PSALM 81:4

תקעי בחדש שֶׁפֶר בַּכֶּסֶה לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. The two feasts here mentioned are variously understood by recent critics. The commoner view is that they are New Moon and Passover; for the second some hesitate between Passover and Sukkot; others take the two to be New Year's Day and Sukkot. This last is probably the correct view. The statement in vs. 6, “he made it a law in Joseph when he went forth over [or,

⁸ See note 6, p. 13.

against] the land of Egypt," is supposed (by Graetz and others) to make it certain that the reference is to Passover. But Sept. reads more naturally "from the land of Egypt" (cf. Ps. 114:1), a reading that may include Sukkot as well. The psalm is not a unit: the paragraph vss. 7-17 is an exhortation to Israel based on a review of the exodus history, and has no natural connection with the joyful summons in vss. 2-5. Vs. 6 might belong to either part: to vss. 2-5 as a chronological statement, or to vss. 7-17 as an introduction. But the peculiar phraseology, the use of the name Joseph (יְהוֹשֻׁפָּט) instead of Jacob or Israel (as in the rest of the psalm), suggests that it is an editorial insertion to connect the two parts. The third line, שֹׁפֶת לֹא יִדְעֵנִי אֲשַׁמֶּנּוּ, is again a gloss to the second line, a parallel to 'Egypt,' describing it as a land of a foreign language (so 114:1); an allusion to a mysterious message from Yahweh, an unknown speech or lip uttering the following words, would be out of keeping with the conditions—the divine utterances were plain to Moses, as later to the prophets. The first of the two feasts is probably the New Moon of the seventh month, which was ushered in with blowing of the trumpet (Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1); so Targ.: בִּירְחָא בִּרְחֵשִׁי; another reference to the feast, according to Jewish ritual, occurs in Ps. 47:6, and others probably in 98:6; 150:3. If this be the first feast, the second is naturally Sukkot (so the Jewish tradition). The word כֶּסֶה (written כָּסָה in Prov. 7:20, the only other place in the Old Testament in which it occurs) is apparently Aramaic (for the Syriac usage see Payne-Smith); Pesh. uses it for the fifteenth day of the month (I Kings 12:32) and for the twenty-third day (II Chron. 7:10); that is, for the full-moon week. The etymology of the word is uncertain. The derivation from כָּסָה 'to cover' (*Rosh ha-Shanah*, 7b, 8a) is improbable. The Hebrew Lexicon of Brown-Driver-Briggs compares Assyr. kuse'u = a gu 'cap;' the latter word means 'full moon' and also the god Sin (Delitzsch, Muss-Arnolt), but no light is thereby thrown on the etymology, the origin of the sense 'moon' being as obscure in Assyr. as in Heb.; it is hardly probable that the moon should be called kuse'u as being the cap of a god. Compare Arab. كُسْءُ 'that which follows after, the latter part of anything': كُسْءُ الشَّهْرِ 'the latter part of the month.' From this sense the meaning 'full moon' may well have come (cf. the Syr. usage), and the word may thus have been employed as a designation of the Assyrian moon god. Arabic forms from the stem دَبَرِ 'to follow' are employed similarly to express the latter part of anything, as, for example, of the month; cf. also the old Arab. name for the fourth day of the week, دُبَار, perhaps = 'the latter part of the week.' In II Chron. 7:10 the Arab. Version renders the Heb. "twenty-third day" by نَصَف

الشهر, "the half of the month." Possibly an Aram. stem כשא 'to follow' is to be recognized.

NOTE 2. PSALM 22:27, 30

In vs. 30 many commentators, from Pinsker on, read אֵל לֹא instead of the unsuitable אֵלֶיךָ of the Mas. text. This אֵלֶיךָ seems to have been copied or imitated by a scribe from the יֵאָכְלֶיךָ of vs. 27. But this latter term also is inappropriate. Vss. 27-32 form a separate psalm, an expectation of triumph for Yahweh and for Israel, with which, the poet declares (according to the Mas. text), the pious shall be satisfied. In vs. 27 the expression "the עֲנִיִּים shall eat and be satisfied" is commonly explained as a reference to a sacrificial meal, or else as a general expression of complete content. Neither of the explanations is probable. The mention of vows in vs. 26 does not involve a sacrificial meal, and there is no room for such a meal in the psalm; and the choice of the word "eat" in this connection to express pious satisfaction would be strange. The proper reading is suggested in the substantially identical verse 69:33: "the pious will see [Yahweh's gracious intervention] and rejoice;" we should probably read יֵאָכְלֶיךָ and יִשְׂמְחוּ for the יֵאָכְלֶיךָ and יִשְׂבְּעוּ of 22:27. Further, the דְּשֵׁנִי in vs. 30 is suspicious: the "fat ones of the earth" may indeed be understood to mean the "flourishing, prosperous," but the parallel line "all that go down to the dust" and the general context suggest a larger expression. Vss. 28, 29, 31, 32 announce the coming universal worship of Yahweh, and a universal statement in vs. 30 is to be expected. Universality may indeed be gained by recognizing in the verse two classes (individuals or nations), the rich (דְּשֵׁנִי) and the poor (יֹרְדֵי עֶפֶר), or the prosperous and the feeble, or those who are in vigorous life on earth and those who have gone down to Sheol. But the expression יֹרְדֵי עֶפֶר does not mean either "the poor" or "the dead," but rather "those who are in process of going down to the dust of death," that is, mortals (cf. 104:29; Job 7:21; 17:16; Eccles. 3:20). Wellhausen avoids the difficulty by omitting יֹרְדֵי עֶפֶר כל and rendering the second line: "before him bow themselves in the dust." But the form of vss. 27, 28 suggests a separate subject in this line; an appropriate reading is obtained by changing דְּשֵׁנִי to שֹׁכֵנִי (so also Brüll), which gives the sense: "Him alone shall worship all the inhabitants of the earth, before Him shall bow down all mortals." The remainder of the verse is a gloss, intended to be an explanation of יֹרְדֵי עֶפֶר כל, which is taken to mean "the poor." In several verses there are third lines that confuse the general couplet arrangement. In vs. 24 "fear him all the folk (זֶרַע) of Israel" is virtually a repetition of the preceding "all the folk of Jacob honor Him"—it might be an original parallel, but is probably a scribal addition. The same thing is true of the unnecessary ending of vs. 25: "when he cried

to him he heard." Vs. 27c, "may your hearts live forever!" is formally and logically indefensible; it appears to be the exclamation of a reader whose soul was stirred by the psalmist's picture of the happiness of the righteous. In vs. 28 the *יִזְכֶּרֶךָ* is unnecessary, and the suffix in *לְפָנֶיךָ* must be made third person. The paragraph vss. 27-30 will then read: "The pious will see and rejoice, they will praise Yahweh that seek him. All the earth will turn to Yahweh, all nations will worship him. For the kingdom is Yahweh's, he is ruler of the nations. All dwellers on earth will see and worship, all mortals will bow before him." Vss. 31, 32 seem to be a later addition.

NOTE 3. PSALM 118:27

אֵל יְהוָה וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ אֶסְרֵי חַג בַּעֲבָתִים עַד קִרְנֵת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. The antiquity of the text is vouched for by the ancient versions, which all follow it literally. All take *חַג* in the sense of 'festival,' and all except Pesh., Aq., and Hex. Syr. understand *עֲבָתִים* as 'leafy boughs;' both Syr. versions have 'cords' (or 'chains'), and Aq. has 'fat' (*πιμέλειον*), which term is explained by a note in §ⁿ to the effect that 'cords' here are intestines bound with fat, without dung (an allusion to a sacrifice). The rendering 'festival' for *חַג* yields no satisfactory sense for the second half of the verse. The expression 'bind the feast' is unintelligible, and the Hebrew cannot here mean 'begin the feast;' the phrase *אֶסְרֵי מִלְחָמָה* (I Kings 20:14), cited for the meaning, refers to joining two armies in battle—it supposes two things to be joined, and the verb cannot have a single thing as its object. Wellhausen translates: "bind the festival with ropes," with the remark that the line is "altogether enigmatical." And it is decisive for this interpretation of *חַג* that there is no hint of a festival in the connection. The psalm appears to represent a body of persons (soldiers or others) who, celebrating a recent victory, march to the temple to render thanks, and are received and blessed by the priests (vs. 26); vs. 27a is apparently the response of the people, and on this follows vs. 27b, which thus does not refer to a festival. A procession there seems to be, and accordingly the sense 'procession' or 'dance' is assigned by some scholars to *חַג*. But this interpretation does not relieve the difficulty: apart from the question whether it is legitimate, it is not clear how a procession or a dance can be said, according to Old Testament usage of terms, to be 'bound.' Those who so render *חַג* generally take *עֲבָתִים* in the sense of 'leafy boughs,' as in Sept. and Lat., but without arriving at a satisfactory sense for the passage. Cheyne (in the first edition of his *Book of Psalms*): "bind the procession [that is, the members of the procession] with branches, (step on) to the altar-horns;" but a 'procession' cannot be bound, and the supposition that the personages of a procession were linked together by branches is purely imaginary; nor does it appear why the procession should advance to the horns of the

altar (surely a difficult procedure) rather than to the altar simply. This interpretation is abandoned by Canon Cheyne in his second edition, where he substitutes for the Masoretic text an entirely different verse. The objections to Cheyne's first rendering apply also to Duhm's: "bind [or, twine] the dance with boughs up to the horns of the altar" (if, he adds, the text is correct), and, in part, to Baethgen's suggestion that the meaning is: "bring the branches to the altar-horns and touch them," the supposition being that the sacred branches communicate sacredness to the altar—there is no authority for supposing such a ritual procedure. Luther, "adorn the festival with thick boughs," and Haupt (in *SBOT*), "decorate the route of the procession with garlands," give an unwarranted meaning to the verb **אָסַר**. As to the word **עֲבָתִים** it occurs in the Old Testament only in the sense 'cords' and 'clouds' (Ezek. 19:11; 31:3, 10, 14); but, as there is an adjective **עֵבֵת** 'leafy,' the Sept. rendering may be accepted as possible, the reference being, apparently, to the boughs employed in the Sukkot celebration (Lev. 23:40), though these were used, not for processions or dances, but to build booths as temporary places of abode. With such a sense for **עֲבָתִים** the difficulty remains, however, that the term cannot be brought into intelligible connection with the other words of the verse. The 'sacrifice' of the English Version represents what was up to a few years ago the prevailing rendering of **זֶבֶח** in this passage. This rendering is based on the paraphrases of early rabbinical expositors who wished to secure literal exactness in the sacrificial ritual and in biblical references to it. The transitional interpretation appears in Targ. Onkelos on Ex. 23:18 where for Heb. "the fat of my **זֶבֶח**" the targumist writes, "the fat of the sacrifice of my **פֶּסַח**," inserting "sacrifice" because the fat was that of the sacrificial animal. The discussion of **זֶבֶח** in Hag. 10b (with reference to Ex. 12:14; Lev. 23:41; Ex. 23:18) is cited in Levy's *Neuhebr. u. Ch. Wbch.* and Jastrow's *Dict. Talmud* to prove that the word is used in the sense of 'festal offering;' but the context shows that all that is meant is that a **זֶבֶח** must be accompanied by offerings, in illustration of which Ex. 10:25 is quoted, where Moses says to Pharaoh: "thou must also give us sacrifices (**זִבְחִים**) and holocausts." The verb **זָבַח** also is used in the Tract *Hagiga* simply in the sense 'keep a feast': Mishna 1:6, "he who does not keep the festival on the first day may keep it on any succeeding day"—it is unnecessary to render, "he who does not sacrifice," etc. The Targum on the psalm passage under consideration follows the method of Onkelos and expands so as to extract a meaning from the text: "bind the lamb for the sacrifice of the festival with chains until ye bring it near and apply its blood to the horns of the altar." The Targum interpretation was followed by Kimḥi and Rashi, and later many Christian commentators took **זֶבֶח** in the sense of 'victim' simply—so Schmid, Ainsworth, J. H. Michaelis, Delitzsch, Hitzig, Ewald, Hupfeld, Perowne, and others. It was explained that the animals were

bound because they were very numerous, and in order that they might not get away; it was even suggested that they were raised up on to the horns of the altar and sacrificed (though animals were never slain on the altar). In support of the meaning 'victim' for חֵג recent writers have cited Ex. 23:18 ("the fat of my חֵג") and Mal. 2:3 ("the dung of your חֵג's"); but there is no difficulty in regarding the fat and the dung as things pertaining to the festival. There is no reason for rendering חֵג by 'festal offering' in any passage.⁹ Nor is there authority for the senses 'procession' and 'sacred dance' sometimes given it. The author of Ps. 42 associates keeping festival (חֵג) with joy and thanksgiving, and probably alludes to a procession; but these are merely accessories of the חֵג. In I Sam. 30:16, where the Amalekites are אֹכְלִים וְשׂוֹתִים, the ח' doubtless means 'having a merry time,' that is, indulging in the merriment that was an ordinary feature of a חֵג—there is no ground for particularizing 'dancing.'¹⁰ For the significations 'procession,' 'pilgrim feast,' appeal is made to the Arab. noun حَج which,

though it is actually used only for pilgrimage to Mecca or Jerusalem, meant originally no doubt a journey or resort to a place (particularly a shrine or other sacred place), and then came naturally to include the ceremonies connected with the cult of the place. Such was probably the early use of the word in Hebrew; but in the Old Testament it means definitely the 'festival' as a whole, not particularly any one detail of the ceremonies. It may, then, be assumed that in the psalm-verse חֵג means 'festival;' that the psalm has nothing to do with a festival; that the verb אָסַר yields no satisfactory sense in the connection; that the expression עַד קִרְנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ is unintelligible (except in accounts of the construction of altars, of men seeking asylum, and in Am. 3:14 where it is threatened that the חֵבֶ' ק' shall be cut off, the horns of the altar are elsewhere mentioned only in connection with the ritual application of blood to them, the preposition being עַל). The first part of the verse may be a gloss, a fragment of the priestly blessing, Num. 6:25f. (יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים, etc.), suggested by vs. 26; how much of the blessing was inserted it is not possible to say—perhaps a couplet. The remainder of the verse seems to be a mechanical combination of fragments of several glosses. A scribe who supposed the psalm to refer to the Sukkot festival (vs. 25 was later used in connection with the festival) may have written חֵג and perhaps בַּעֲבֻחִים ('ע' in the sense of 'boughs'). As a sacrifice was taken for granted (whether in connection with a festival or as a part of a thanks-

⁹The word פֶּסַח is used in the Old Testament not only of the festival, but also of the victim (Ex. 12:21; Deut. 16:2; II Chron. 30:17ab; cf. I Cor. 5:7); but this usage holds only for this one feast, and the expression שְׁחַטֵּי הַפֶּסַח suggests that 'animal' or 'victim' may be the original sense of the word.

¹⁰On the doubtful יִדְרֹגֶנָּה Ps. 107:27, see the lexicons and commentaries; in any case the meaning is not 'dance.'

giving ceremony), another rubric may have referred to the putting of blood *על קרנת המזבח*. The *אסרו* may possibly be corruption of the *יטא* of the priestly blessing, or of *עשר*, the technical term for the celebration of a festival. These rubrics, however they may have arisen, appear to have got into the text in the form of a sentence, which, however, is unintelligible.¹¹

NOTE 4. PSALM 40:7-9

In regard to the translation of this passage it is to be noted that *הטאה* (v. 7) must, from the context, be rendered 'sin-offering' and not (as in Sept.) 'sin;' that *באתי במגלת ספר* (vs. 8) does not mean, "I am come with [or, I bring] the roll of the book" (DeWette, Ewald, Hitzig, Delitzsch), but the *במ'* is to be taken with the following *כתוב*; and *עלי כתוב* means "prescribed to me." The origin of the Sept. reading *σωμα δὲ καταγγέλω μοι* for *אזנים כרית לי* (vs. 7) is not clear; but, whether the *σωμα* be scribal error for *ὥρια* (which appears in some Sept. MSS, and in the other Greek versions), or the clause be a Sept. paraphrase, or have passed into the Sept. from the Epistle to the Hebrews 10:5 (as Grotius suggests), where it may be held to represent the free messianic interpretation of the writer (not a probable supposition)—whatever its origin—it does not help the interpretation of the psalm passage or call for a change of the Hebrew text. The exegetical difficulties relate to the expressions *אזנים כרית לי*, *אזמרתי הנה באתי*, *אז במגלת*, *אז אמרתי הנה באתי*, *אזני* instead of *אזני*, the clause separates the parallel lines of the verse and has no natural connection with the thought of the paragraph; the first difficulty may be avoided by transposing the words, placing them, for example, after "then I said" (so Olshausen), or substituting them for the first line of vs. 8 (Wellhausen, "mine ears hast thou opened by means of the book"). But these changes being made, the difficulty remains that in the Old Testament the opening or uncovering of the ears comes by a divine voice, not by a book; the psalmist lives in a literary period when guidance is received not by prophetic revelation, but by a written word. The allusion in *אזמרתי הנה באתי* also is obscure: the point of time of the *אז* is not indicated, the *באתי* suggests an unexplained movement, and the *אמרתי* a preceding unrecorded address. It may be supposed, indeed, that the *שאלת* of vs. 7 involves an address; but this word is preceded by the negative *לא*—God has made no demands. The construction in vs. 9b is not clear: the natural sense is, "in the book (a duty) is prescribed to me"—a book cannot be prescribed, only a course of conduct (as in II Kings 22:13); and, further, the

¹¹ Briggs regards vss. 27 f. as glosses.

relation of the remark (concerning a duty prescribed) to the context is not clear. Much must be read into the text to get a satisfactory meaning from it. Various emendations have been proposed. Graetz in vs. 7 writes לָהּ instead of לָא, אֲזִנִּים for אֲזִנִּים, כְּרִית for כְּרִית, and renders, "if thou desiredst . . . I would choose fat (beasts), if thou demandedst . . . , then (vs. 8) I would say," etc.; these changes, however, are too numerous and violent, and the resultant sense does not commend itself. Duhm takes אֲזִנִּים to be a corrupt variant of אֲזִנִּים, כְּרִית, and translates 7b and the rest of 8: "sin-offering thou hast not required—lo, I have read it (בְּכֹתִי) in a roll of a book written for me," and regards this as a gloss intended to furnish the authority for the seemingly radical statement of 7a; here also the changes of text-words are not probable (on the gloss see below). Briggs reads in 7b אֲזִנִּים לִי, and in 8a אֲזִנִּים לִי, which he connects with the preceding line—changes that are phonetically easy, but still leave the course of the thought vague. It seems clear that 7b ("ears thou hast digged to me") cannot stand in its present place (even as parenthesis), since it separates the two lines of the couplet and destroys the rhythmic symmetry (so Olshausen, Wellhausen). Vs. 8 also is interruptive; Duhm's suggestion of a gloss may relieve the difficulty in part, but unity and clearness are secured only by the omission of 7b and 8.¹² Vs. 8 is possibly the corrupt form of a marginal protest against 7a, c: "sacrifice," the glossator may be supposed to say, "is nevertheless prescribed in the law."¹³ Vs. 7b would still remain a problem; reversing Duhm's conjecture, it might be corrupt doublet of 8a. In any case the thought of the passage is contained in vss. 7 and 9; the writer may have had in mind Jer. 7:21 ff., and similar ideas in the prophets; the glossator, on the other hand, would be appealing to the ritual law. This does not show that the original psalmist wrote before the time of Nehemiah, but only that he, like the sages, laid no stress on the sacrificial ritual.

NOTE 5. VOWS IN THE PSALTER

There are a number of references in the Psalter to vows, all approving or sympathetic; the most relate to a favor received, and the vows were probably conditional: 22:26, the vows are to be paid because Yahweh has heard the cry of his servants; 50:14, the payment of vows is in connection with a thank-offering;¹⁴ 56:13 f., the writer recognizes his obligation to pay his vows and make offerings because he has been rescued from death; 61:6, 9, God has heard vows and bestowed a blessing, and the

¹² Vs. 8 is thrown out by Stade in his paper on Ps. 40 in *Oriental. Studien Th. Noldeke gewidmet*, pp. 632 f.

¹³ Possibly: "But I say, sin-offering [הַטָּאת for הַטָּאת] is prescribed," etc.

¹⁴ In vs. 23 Wellhausen's שָׁלֵם נִדְרֵי, for שָׁם דֶּרֶךְ, seems probable.

psalmist sings praise day by day in order to pay his vows; 65:2 f., praise and payment of vows is due to God who is a hearer of prayer; 66:13 f., 19, the psalmist will pay vows uttered when he was in distress, for God heard his prayer; 76:12, vow and pay, for God is terrible; 116:12-18, for benefits conferred a thank-offering is to be made and vows are to be paid; 132:2, reference to a vow said to have been made by David, to prepare an abode for Yahweh, that is, for the ark (there is no mention of this vow in our historical books—the reference rests, doubtless, on a current tradition). In all these cases (the last are, probably, not excepted) there was, it seems, the promise of an offering provided a certain request were granted. But, though the *quid pro quo* is of the essence of the vow, it is not necessary to suppose that the psalmists' feeling was baldly commercial; it is probable that, along with the belief that success depended on divine intervention, the vow expressed a simple, devout thankfulness. Vow-making continued among the Jews into the talmudic period (Acts 18:18; 21:23, and the Tract Nedarim), but with diminishing significance. In Prov. 31:2 the vow, with prayer that a son be given, is of the simplest sort; the naïve, non-moral popular usage is described in Prov. 7:14; the text of Prov. 20:25 is in disorder, but the reference seems to be the effort to avoid payment. Eccles. 5:3 f. is contemptuous of those who delay payment; the business-like mode of conducting the affair is indicated by the fact that a messenger is sent to collect the amount due. In Ben-Sira there is no mention of vows—the sages took little interest in them. And though legislation and comment on the practice was continued by Jewish scholars till a late period (Maimonides, *Yad*, and the *Šulhan 'Aruk*), there are indications (as in Ned. 20a, 22a) that it was disliked and discouraged by some rabbis. It is a survival from an early low stage of religion, and tended to fall into disuse in proportion as religion became ethically and intellectually clear.

NOTE 6. PROTEST AGAINST SACRIFICE

That there was a Jewish movement of indifference to sacrifice down to the fall of Jerusalem is clear from the history. It is only necessary to recall, in addition to the passages cited above, the broad thought of Dan., chap. 9, the failure of the Onias temple to attract the worship of the Egyptian Jews (though the superior dignity of the Jerusalem temple doubtless contributed to this result), the strict ethical tone of the sages mentioned in the Pirke Abot, particularly Antigonos of Soko (whose Greek name and his expression "let the fear of Heaven be on you" [cf. Dan. 4:23] suggest foreign influence), the attitude of the Essenes, and the tone of the greater part of the New Testament, particularly the Sermon on the Mount and such spiritualizing conceptions of sacrifice as those of Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17. The Jewish movement was part of a general western movement that included Greece and Rome, Egypt, and western Asia.

The recoil from the naïve, non-moral popular worship, visible as early as Plato, took the form of the establishment of mysteries and new cults like those of Isis and Serapis. There was a succession of great moralists, Greek and Roman Platonists and Stoics, and a long line of men of noble moral character. In Plato, Cleanthes, Seneca, Plutarch and many others there are indications of desire for individual religious independence and individual union with God. The period, one of extraordinary religious excitement and activity and of religious creative power, was marked by moral exaltation and by a corresponding elevation of the conception of God. It was in this world that the great body of the psalmists lived, and it is natural to suppose that they were affected by its tone and its ideas. The Jewish movement was, doubtless, as is remarked above, in part native, but it was probably stimulated, heightened, and colored by the outside influences. The Jews were far from being intellectually isolated. They mixed freely, as the narratives of Josephus and I Maccabees show, with Persians, Greeks, and Romans; and the intellectual and religious influence thence resulting is visible in such books as Proverbs, Koheleth, Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, and Enoch, as well as in Philo and the New Testament. There was then a meeting and partial amalgamation of all the elements of the western world.

§ 2

The Jews formulated a noteworthy conception of law—not of natural law, but of social and religious law, supernaturally given, infallible and eternal. In contrast with the theory of a world governed by immutable natural or physical forces, they conceived a society resting on rules that supplied all the material of life. This view is expressed more or less distinctly in a number of passages in the Psalter: 12:7; 19:8 ff.; 25:4 ff.; 26:3; 37:31; 94:10, 12; 111:7 f.; 119. The striking characteristic of this law, as the psalmists and other Jews thought of it, is that it is external to man, given from without and imposed on life by non-human authority. It is true, of course, that the details of the code were the product of Jewish experience; but they were held to have been given directly by God, and in that fact lay their special value to pious Jews. The law took the place of the old spontaneous utterances of the prophets, and, to a great extent, of the sacrificial ritual; in Ps. 119 it is almost personified, and appears to take the place of God himself in the affection and reverence of the writer. This change in the religious attitude

rested on a justifiable instinct. The prophets were not seldom creatures of impulse, and their utterances were sometimes called forth by ill-understood circumstances. The sacrificial ritual was a ceremony that did not take hold of the daily life of man. Society, to be well ordered, required an organic law, dictated by wisdom, fixed once for all, competent to guide men in the doubtful and dangerous experiences of life. All civil or social law is in a certain sense based on external authority; the peculiarity of the Jewish view was that the authority was regarded as divine. The law was external, not only in its source, but also in its material: it dealt with the visible actions only, not concerning itself with motives and feelings; the command of the Decalogue against coveting refers not to mere desire, but to desire that it is intended to realize in action.

In the Psalter this conception of externality in its double sense, is modified and in part neutralized by the distinct attribution of moral purity to the law (as in Ps. 19) and by the appeal to man's own sense of its perfection. A pivotal term in Ps. 119 is "knowledge." Knowledge is said to be necessary in order that the law may be comprehended, and it is the law that is represented as giving insight. The psalmist turns unconsciously from the outward authority to the inward, and becomes himself the judge of the excellence of the law; his "knowledge" is substantially identical with the "wisdom" of Proverbs, though it is not formally applied, like the "wisdom" of Proverbs, to all the affairs of life; it rather represents the beginning of the movement that culminated in the *Hokma* literature. This movement stands isolated in the Jewish development—it is equally remote from the early life of public worship and ceremonial obedience and from the later rabbinical science. After the first century B. C. it passes out of existence—the current of Jewish thought went in a different direction. The exaltation of knowledge was not a pure Jewish product—it must be referred in part to foreign influence, perhaps Persian,¹⁵ but probably mainly Greek. It is not surprising that some of the writers of our psalms should be affected by the Persian and Greek worlds in which they lived.

¹⁵ See note 7, p. 17.

The reason for the reception of such a production as Ps. 119 into the collection of psalms is probably to be found, not in the supposition that it was written for synagogue worship, but in its national tone. It glorifies the national law, and it alludes to experiences of trial and rescue, which, if individual, befell the man as a member of the nation. Of the services in the synagogues of the pre-Christian time we have no information except what is suggested by the name *προσευχή* given to an Egyptian synagogue in a Greek inscription of the second century B.C.¹⁶ From this and from Luke 4:16 ff. it may be inferred that the exercises consisted in prayer and reading from the Scriptures, that is, the Tora and the Prophets; the poetical books were certainly not canonized before the second century B. C. (probably not before the first century), and it is not likely that singing or chanting hymns formed part of the exercises in a *προσευχή*.

While there was no scientific recognition of natural law among the Jews of the pre-Christian period, there are traces in the Psalter of a half-scientific curiosity respecting the physical world and the life of beasts and men. Without laying undue stress on the description in Pss. 19 (the sun traversing the sky, like a bridegroom issuing from his chamber or a strong man joyously entering on a race), 29 (the passage of a thunder-storm over Palestine),¹⁷ 104 (the habits of terrestrial and marine beasts), 107:23-30 (the experiences of mariners), we may feel that the writers, in their framework in praise to God, yet lose themselves in admiration of the phenomena described. A comparison of Ps. 8:4-9 with Gen. 1:28 and Job 7:17 f. (cf. IV Ezr. 8:34) is instructive. The passage in Genesis is the mere statement of a fact of experience—man's dominion over the lower animals; Job asks with bitter or scornful skepticism, why the supreme deity should occupy himself with so insignificant a being as man; the psalmist, reflecting on man's twofold position—his smallness and weakness in comparison with the great heavenly bodies, and his lordship over all other terrestrial creatures—appears to have in mind a problem; he is neither scornful nor a mere chronicler, but seeks

¹⁶ See Grenfell, Hunt and Smyly, *The Tebtunis Papyri*, I, No. 86, ll. 18, 29.

¹⁷ See note 8, p. 19.

to understand the significance of man's place in the universe.¹⁸ Ps. 139, in addition to its noteworthy formulation of the conception of God's omnipresence and his acquaintance with men's thoughts, shows a peculiar interest in the formation of the human body in the womb (vss. 13-16)—a physiological inquiry similar to that of Job 10:8-11 and more detailed than that of Eccles. 11:5. The Hebrew text is unfortunately in bad condition, so that the whole thought of the passage cannot be recovered, but the writer's approach to scientific curiosity is apparent.¹⁹ Such reflections as appear in these psalms (8 and 139), though their application is religious, betray a mundane interest in man, and suggest that more lay in the minds of the writers than is visible in the text. They may be referred to the general progress of Jewish thought at a time when their world was full of intellectual excitement. In Ecclesiastes the allusion to the embryo is intended to illustrate human ignorance—in the psalm it is made the occasion of devout wonder, and thus acquires liturgical value.

NOTES

NOTE 7. PERSIAN RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

The traces of Persian influence in the later Jewish angelology and demonology, and also in the formulation of the doctrine of resurrection, are unmistakable. For the earlier period (the fifth, fourth, and third centuries B. C.) the fact of such influence is less certain. It is not quite clear what the Persian religious thought of that time was. But, assuming that the ideas now found in the Gathas were then current, it is obvious that there are noteworthy resemblances between them and certain ideas of the Old Testament Psalter. Thus, the Gathas have the contrast of righteous and wicked (Yasna 31:17; *al.*), and the righteous body appears substantially as a church, which is spoken of in the reverent and affectionate tone that is common in the Psalter. Both works portray national struggle, and deplore national suffering: the yasnas represent a conflict between an agricultural population and a nomadic, and lament the loss of kine; the psalms speak less definitely of deprivations and oppressions. In both the human qualities insisted on are piety and obedience, and these are held to bring happiness. In both it is sometimes hard to distinguish a moral element in the lamentations; in many cases the "righteousness" of the Gathas seems to be wholly or partly ritual. Ahura Mazda guides and blesses by his righteousness, goodness, and

¹⁸ See note 9, p. 20.

¹⁹ See note 10, p. 20.

power, and by his spirit; his religion is called the Truth, as against the Lie of the enemy. The "wisdom" of the Gathas is enlightenment that guides men in the affairs of life (Yasna 31:22; 32:9; 48:3, 5, 11; *al.*)—it is based on and directed by the divine law, and so far corresponds to the "understanding" of certain psalms, especially Ps. 119, and to the "wisdom" of Prov., chaps. 1-7, etc. There is no trace in the Gathas of the personified cosmogonic Wisdom—no one of the Amesha Spentas has such a rôle. It would seem, therefore, that the conception of wisdom in Prov. 8:22-31 and Wisdom of Solomon cannot have come from Persian sources, and this fact throws doubt on the existence of specific Persian influence in the earlier conception of wisdom in the Psalter. Probably the most that can be said is that the Jewish idea grew up naturally in the Persian-Greek intellectual atmosphere in which the Jews lived. It may be added that the *ameretât* of the Gathas, supposing it to signify ethical immortality, marks an important difference between them and the psalms—in the latter there is no statement of immortality. The passages commonly relied on in Ps. 49 and 73 to prove the existence of this idea are not decisive. In Ps. 49:16, if the verse be genuine (by some it is rejected as a gloss), the expressions **אלהים יפרה נפשי** and **מיך שאול כי** do not signify in the Psalter life after death; see Pss. 18:5 ff.; 30:4; 33:18 f.; 86:13; 88:4, 7 (cf. Prov. 23:14), where similar terms are used to express rescue from physical death on earth, and this interpretation of 49:16 accords with the context. So also the course of thought in Ps. 73 points to such rescue in vs. 24: **בעצתך תנחני ואחר כבוד תקחני**—the psalm is an exposition of the precariousness of the earthly life and ambitions of the wicked, and of the folly of envying these persons—for himself the psalmist expects a different lot on earth (vss. 25-28). The first clause of vs. 24 is explained by the preceding verse: **ואני תמיד עמך**—where the reference is to this life. The second clause, according to the poetic usage, naturally has a similar reference, but the text is in disorder. The **כבוד** cannot well mean glory on earth or glory in heaven. Graetz and Wellhausen propose **ואחריך ביד תקחני** (Graetz: perhaps **תחזקני**), to which an objection is that the resultant sense is the same as that of vs. 23b, and the expression "takest me after thee" is strange. Duhm thinks that **לקח** is a technical term for the translation of a man to heaven or to paradise (Gen. 5:24; II Kings 2:9 f.); it is employed, however, in Ps. 18:17 to express rescue from deadly peril. The **כלה שארי ולבבי** of vs. 26 does not necessarily signify death—it may mean only great distress; cf. Pss. 31:11; 39:11; 90:7; 119:81. The parallelism of 73:23-26 with 16:7-11 is obvious: both begin with a reference to divine guidance in earthly life, and end with expressions of the conviction that God will not abandon his servants to death (that is, premature or unhappy earthly death); the **בעצתך תנחני** of 73:24 corre-

sponds to the יַעֲצֵנִי . . יְהוָה of 16:7; vs. 24b, וְאַחֵר כְּבֹד תִּקְחֵנִי, may be a corrupt fusion of two readings וְאַחֲזֵת בִּידִי and בִּידִי תִקְחֵנִי, both taken from vs. 23b. The omission of vs. 24 would not impair the thought of the passage, would rather make it clearer: "I am always with thee—thou holdest my hand; I have no helper but thee in heaven or on earth—though I be reduced to extremity, God is my strength always; those that are far from thee perish, but I draw near to thee."

NOTE 8. PSALM 29

The description of the thunderstorm is contained in vss. 2-10 (or, as some hold, in vss. 2-9). Vss. 1 and 2 are a liturgical formula (cf. 96:7 f.) and vs. 11 is liturgical ending. With Briggs I omit 3b (as a gloss explaining that the voice of Yahweh is thunder, and as destroying the couplet symmetry) and, with many critics, insert קוֹל before יְהוָה in 3c. In vs. 5b I omit יְהוָה as a rhythmically undesirable scribal explicitum. In vs. 6, with all recent critics, the suffix is to be omitted, and the first half of the verse made to end with לְבָנוֹן. Vs. 7 is defective (so Olshausen, *al.*); most commentators complete it by adding a noun in the first half and a verb in the second half. Briggs omits it as interrupting the thought, but it is not probable that a scribe would insert an independent sentence that is not of the nature of an explanatory gloss. The יְהוָה of 8b is better omitted, in accordance with the norm of the couplets, as explicitum. It seems necessary in vs. 9a, in order to maintain the reference to inanimate nature, to point אֵילֹת instead of אֵילֹת (so Lowth, Cheyne, Duhm, Briggs, *al.*) and in 9b, with Briggs, to substitute קוֹל יְהוָה for יְ, for the sake of the meter. Vs. 9c stands isolated—it has no natural connection with the preceding or the following context; the כָּלִי has no antecedent—it cannot well refer to the objects just enumerated, and the הֵיכַל must mean the celestial palace of Yahweh. It may be a misplaced gloss on vss. 1, 2, and is here better omitted (so Briggs). The מְבוֹל of vs. 10 has defied all attempts at explanation; an allusion to Noah's flood is out of the question, since it would be here irrelevant, and the picture of Yahweh sitting on the celestial ocean (if מְבוֹל could be so used, which is improbable, if not impossible) would be contrary to Old Testament usage and somewhat grotesque; nor can the מְבוֹל mean the storm just described, in which there is wind, thunder, and lightning, but no flood. The text appears to be corrupt, and Ps. 9:5 suggests the reading יְהוָה יֹשֵׁב; in the second half יְהוָה may be omitted. It is a question whether the verse should be assigned to the body of the psalm or to the liturgical ending; but, as it lacks the ejaculatory and petitionary tone proper to such ending, it seems better to make it part of the description; the poet may be supposed to conclude his picture of Yahweh's power with

the general statement that he sits on his throne as king forever. The psalm proper will then consist of eight couplets, to which an ascription of praise has been prefixed and a liturgical sentence appended.

NOTE 9. PSALM 8

The original psalm consists of vss. 4-9. Vss. 2 and 10 are current expressions, liturgical introduction and conclusion. Vs. 3 bears no relation to the thought of the psalm (which is reflection on the manifestation of Yahweh's power in the heavenly bodies, and on man's remarkable position in the world), is rhythmically loose, almost prose, and interrupts the rhythmical structure of the psalm. It is an allusion to national fortunes that might be appropriate in Ps. 44, where the expression **מִפְנֵי אֱרִיב וּמִתְנַקֵּם** occurs (vs. 17), but is here out of place. The allusion in the first clause is obscure to us: the **יֹנְקִים** and **עוֹלָלִים** may be meant figuratively—there is, perhaps, a reference to some historical fact (military or similar occurrence), not mentioned elsewhere, when a great salvation was wrought by feeble means. The verse appears to have been inserted by an editor or a scribe who thought that the psalm should not be left without a national coloring.

NOTE 10. PSALM 139:13-16

The text of this paragraph is in such condition that it is impossible to recover its full meaning, but some emendations may be suggested. On account of the initial **כִּי** of vs. 13 it seems better to follow Hitzig in transposing 13 and 14 (so Duhm, *al.*). In vs. 14 the **נִרְאוּת נִפְלִיתִי** appears to be a gloss in explanation of the following **נִפְלְאִים**; the form **נִפְלִיתִי** is suspicious (\mathfrak{C}^B omits the final **י**). Vs. 15 has three clauses, of which the third seems to be a gloss on the second. The expression **רַקְמָתִי בַּחֲדָתוֹת אֶרֶץ** has received several explanations, none of which is satisfactory. A reference to the pre-existence of souls is excluded by the fact that it is not the soul but the body that is here spoken of; cf. Wisd. Sol. 8:20, where it is said that the pre-existent soul came into a body fitted to receive it. The supposition that the secret workshop in which the body is constructed (the womb) is here figuratively called Sheol, the dark and mysterious depths of the earth (Perowne, Cheyne, with references to Aesch., *Eumen.* 665, *ἐν σκοτεινῇ καὶ ὀδυνηρῇ τετραμμένη*, and Koran 39:8, "he created you . . . in the wombs of your mothers . . . in three darknesses") hardly does justice to the words—there is no suggestion of a figure here, and the fact that the womb is described as dark would not account for the definite statement of the text. Nor does it seem allowable to suppose an allusion to the earth, out of which Adam was formed, as the mother and womb of man; and the reference here is

not to the "earth," but to the "depths of the earth," which elsewhere in the Old Testament means "Sheol" (Ezek. 26:20; 31:14, 16, 18; 32:18, 24; Isa. 44:23; Ps. 63:10, cf. Deut. 32:22; Ps. 86:13; 88:7). Evidence that the womb is imaginatively identified with the earth or with Sheol is supposed to be found in Job 1:21: "naked I came forth from my mother's womb and naked I shall return thither." But it is doubtful whether the two passages are parallel. Job 1:21 is admittedly obscure and difficult. On the face of it the "thither" refers to the "mother's womb." If this last expression be taken literally, such a reference in the "thither" is impossible. If it be held to mean "mother earth," then the "thither" refers to the earth and not to Sheol (and therefore does not explain the psalm passage in question); if "thither" refers to Sheol (as, from the usage of the Book of Job, it must do), then, since "womb" cannot be Sheol, there must be a leap of imagination between the beginning of the sentence and its end—the "mother's womb" is most naturally to be taken in its literal sense. Job may use the word "thither" loosely, not so much to describe a condition similar to that which preceded life (Davidson) as to point to the future abode of all men (Budde); he would say: "Naked I was born, naked I shall return to where all men rest after death"—the curttness of the expression being intelligible in an epigrammatic utterance like his.²⁰ In the psalm, on the other hand, in a quasi-scientific account of the formation of the embryo, it is explicitly stated that it was shaped in Sheol—an impossible conception. Nor is much gained by inserting *ו* and reading "as [=as it were] in Sheol" (Perowne, Duhm), for the naturalness of the comparison in this connection is not obvious. The clause is best treated as a scribal insertion, and an explanation of how the insertion came to be made may be found in Isa. 45:19, where the expression "in secret" is parallel to "in the land of darkness," that is, "in Sheol;" a scribe familiar with this passage or with this sense of the words "in secret" may have written on the margin of the psalm-verse what he thought to be its synonym. As is remarked above, the psalm formulates distinctly for the first time in the Old Testament the ideas of Yahweh's absolute omnipresence (including his control of the dwellers in Sheol) and his immediate knowledge of men's thoughts. In earlier Old Testament writings Yahweh's special abode is his temple; he is not thought of as being in Sheol (Isa. 38:18—44:23 is hardly an exception); and he deals with deeds, infers motives from acts (Gen. 6:5), and communicates his will by words, or changes men's spirits (Ezek. 36:26), sometimes by the infusion of his own spirit (Ps. 51:12b). The reason for the complete absence of relations between Yahweh and Sheol in the greater part of the Old Testament is not clear. With a few exceptions, Sheol is mentioned only as the abode of the

²⁰ Cf. Ben-Sira 40:1, where the antithesis "mother's womb" and "mother of all things" is expressed clearly.

dead. Yahweh may cause the earth to open and swallow men up (Num. 16:30)—these then go down to Sheol, but he has nothing more to do with them. His anger may kindle a fire that will burn to the subterranean Sheol and set on fire the foundations of the mountains (Deut. 32:22), but he himself does not enter the underworld. To ransom one from the hand of Sheol (Hos. 13:14, *al.*) is to rescue him from earthly death. Even when Sheol shouts for joy, along with the heavens and the earth, at the redemption of Israel (Isa. 44:23), Yahweh is not concerned with the life below, though here we must recognize a step toward the larger view. According to Am. 9:2, Yahweh's power reaches to Sheol—he is able to take men thence; this statement occurs in a passage that is probably late, since the next verse makes mention of the mythical marine dragon, and these mythical figures appear only in late parts of the Old Testament (see note 12). The first hint of a friendly social interest in Sheol on Yahweh's part is given in Job 14:13, where, however, it is put as a bare possibility: "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol . . . wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me!" Ps. 139 goes beyond all other Old Testament utterances in its distinct statement that Yahweh is in Sheol as he is in heaven. The constantly broadening conception of his rule forced this psalmist to the conclusion that he was as really in the underworld as he was on earth; and this conclusion was doubtless a preparation for the introduction of a moral element into the future life such as appears in Enoch and Wisdom of Solomon. The absence of Yahweh from Sheol in the earlier Hebrew literature leaves the lower world without a divine head. The presence of a well-defined god in the Babylonian underworld might suggest that the Hebrew cosmological scheme once included such a deity, and that he has been effaced from the existing records by the late monotheistic editors. It is in favor of this view that, not to mention Hindus, Greeks, and Romans, even barbarous and half-civilized peoples, such as the Fijians and the Maoris, when they have constructed a tolerably well-organized hades, provide it with a divine ruler, as, indeed, it seems natural that a people possessed of gods should have a god for every place. On the other hand, we know too little of the early theological history of the Semitic Canaanites and North Arabians to hazard an opinion on their attitude toward the life after death and their conception of hades; and it seems unlikely that, if there had been a Hebrew god of the underworld, there should not have survived some mention of him or allusion to him in the Old Testament. There is no such mention or allusion: the proposed identification of the בלעל of Ps. 18:5 (parallel to מרת and שאול) with the Babylonian Belili, or Belilitum, a goddess of the underworld, is precarious and unnecessary; בלעל, as = 'ruin,' gives a good sense, and in any case it must mean 'Sheol' and not 'the god of Sheol.'

§ 3

The view, held by the psalmists in common with the prophets, that the world was governed in the interests of the Israelite people, might seem to make a rational system of ethics impossible—it is not only unscientifically narrow, it also makes the divine governor of the world unjust. Nor is it the whole Jewish nation that the Psalter regards as the center of the world—it is only a part of it, called “righteous” in distinction from another part called “wicked;” the term “wicked,” it is true, sometimes refers to non-Jews, but in a number of passages it designates those Israelites who are held by the writer to be disloyal to the national faith. The terms *צדיק*, *חסיד*, *רשע* are often simply party-names, and therefore they have in themselves no moral content. A *חסיד* or *צדיק*, maintaining his allegiance to the national law, may be ethically bad; a *רשע*, sympathizing with foreign thought, or a personal enemy of the psalmist, may be ethically good. The accounts that we have of the “wicked” come chiefly from the opposing party, and must be taken cautiously.²¹ Nor is the optimism of the Psalter in itself ethical. It is ultimately a healthy and frank, though narrow, confidence in the national destiny; as the prophets regarded their convictions of right as the voice of God speaking in them, so prophets and psalmists regarded their confidence in the national future as a divine promise. This was healthy in so far as confidence in self is an element of success; it becomes a misfortune when it engenders fatuous hope and supineness, but into this pit the psalmists and Jewish people generally did not fall—they never ceased to struggle. Their trust in God tended to give them calmness and happiness, and had the important ethical result that suffering was interpreted as disciplinary. If the ethical theory of the Psalter is thus somewhat confused, there is visible in the book, on the other hand, the feeling that human destiny is determined by conduct (so in all confessions of sin, individual and national), and this remains as a fundamental ethical principle, though its particular applications are sometimes marred by narrow nation-

²¹ See note 11, p. 26.

alism and party feeling. At the bottom of lamentations and rejoicings lies an unformulated conviction that the constitution and course of things is on the side of virtue; that is, in the language of religion, that God favors and maintains what is right and good; and this belief has ethical value (since it holds up the right as an ideal) apart from the question whether the conception of the good is always pure. If the question be asked whether a psalmist conceives of God as a good being, a distinction must be made between his acceptance of his idea of good as a necessary quality of the supreme deity, and his definition of good. As to the first point, there is no hint (none, for example, in 51:6) that God is regarded in the Psalter otherwise than as perfectly just and good—there is no such skepticism as appears in Job and Koheleth. The thought of the book (as is natural in a liturgical collection) lies outside of that spirit of philosophical inquiry that existed in the Jewish world for several centuries. To the psalmists Yahweh is sometimes hard to understand, but there is no doubt of his ethical perfection. As to the second point, the moral code of the Psalter is in general the current one of the time. Omitting its hatred of enemies (to which attention is called in Matt. 5:43), it recognizes the ordinary social virtues (as in Pss. 15, 24). There is perhaps a hint of a finer feeling in 35:13 f. (sympathy with persons who afterward proved to be enemies), but the situation alluded to is not clear. There is no injunction to be kind to enemies, such as is found in Prov. 24:17; 25:21 f., nor any prohibition of retaliation like that in Prov. 24:29; Tobit 4:15; the commands to rescue an enemy's ox or ass (Ex. 23:4 f.) and to love one's fellow-countryman as one's self (Lev. 19:18) are doubtless taken for granted. The non-moral side of sacrifice is rejected. Man is assumed to be a free agent, but there is no recognition of temptation and moral struggle; he stands in direct relation with God—Satan is not mentioned, and there is no intermediary between God and man.

The question whether the doctrine of original sin and total depravity is found in the Psalter is of no great importance for its ethical attitude. Only one passage (51:7) has been supposed to contain this idea, and it, standing alone, does not affect the

general position; it is immaterial whether the speaker in the psalm is an individual or the nation, but the phraseology of vs. 7 points naturally to an individual. The majority of modern scholars hold properly that the verse does not contain the notion of innate sinfulness, but merely (like 58:4; Jer. 17:9, and the story in Gen., chap. 3) regards man (every individual or the nation) as weak and liable to go astray. The view that generation is sinful is not Hebraic (Gen. 1:28; Pss. 127, 128); the law of Lev., chap. 12, is the survival of a tabu custom of savage times (in which birth is regarded as something mysterious and dangerous), and the prescription of a sin-offering treats the woman as the sanctuary and the altar are treated in Ezek. 45:18 f.; Lev. 16:16, 18. The יצר of the Old Testament, described as רע, is simply bad thought, regarded as leading to bad action; there is no trace of the half-personification of Ben-Sira 37:3 and the later Judaism. Nor is it clear that the conception of inherited qualities is to be found in Ps. 51:7 or elsewhere in the Old Testament. It is probable rather that the phenomena of life were observed every one for itself, without any attempt to construct a theory of derivation and perpetuation through birth; of such a theory there is no trace. Nor is predestination to be found in 51:6: "against thee, thee only, have I sinned." The words express the speaker's conviction (be he Israel or an individual) that he has been blameless toward man, but has sinned against God; the nature of his sin is not indicated, but probably it was somehow connected with the non-observance of the national law, that is, with disloyalty to the national God.²² The verse is therefore regarded by Olshausen and others as pointing to Israel as the speaker; this interpretation is possible, and gives a good sense, yet the words and those of vs. 15 ("I will teach transgressors thy ways") may well have been uttered by an individual who shared the experiences and the ideals of the nation. The antithesis of natural and supernatural is not peculiar to the Psalter—it is found throughout the Old Testament and in all religions except Buddhism; its bearing on the creation of a rational system of ethics cannot be discussed here,

²²The expression *בעיניך עשיתי הרע* makes it less possible that the sin referred to is one inadvertence or merely the cherishing of pride or other sinful feeling.

but it may be remarked that, though it may dim the conception of the natural moral life, it does not in the Psalter wholly destroy it; cf. 15; 24:4; 50:18-20; 119, and also 144:12-15.

NOTES

NOTE 11. רשעים, חסידים, צדיקים

While many psalms reveal a conflict between the *צדיקים* and the *רשעים*, and the antagonism may be partly one of ideas, there is not satisfactory evidence in the Psalter that the *רשעים* stand for specific Greek skeptical and theosophical opinions and practices. Friedländer goes beyond the record in discovering in the Psalter a polemic against literal atheism and cosmogonic mysteries;²³ the collision between the "pious" and the "wicked," he says, was a struggle of the national particularistic piety against the new spirit that was forcing its way in and threatened to do away with the traditional simple piety, to gentileize the masses, and to destroy the Jewish nationality—a struggle of the piety of humility against the intellectual arrogance that dared to philosophize about God and his ways. Now, it is true that at the time of the Maccabean uprising, and before and after that time, there was a hellenizing movement among the Jews: Greek customs were widely adopted, and certain Greek ideas were accepted. But, according to our records, the modification of religious doctrine did not go beyond a certain point. Job and Koheleth doubt whether there is a moral government of the world, and advance toward a naturalistic conception of life, but both maintain the theistic point of view and are silent respecting esoteric religious teachings; and Agur's sarcasm (Prov. 30:2-4) is directed, not against a theistic belief, but against those theologians (not mystagogues, but practical Jewish teachers) who professed to be intimately acquainted with God's designs and methods of procedure. It is conceivable, of course, that speculative atheism and gnosticism existed among the Jews as early as the second century B. C.; but, if so, the circle holding such views appears to have been too small to call forth a protest from the orthodox leaders.²⁴ The atheism referred to in the Psalter is a quasi-Epicurean feeling that God does not concern himself with human affairs—it is allied to the skepticism of Job and Koheleth, though ethically different from it: the *רשע* of Ps. 10 who says to himself that there is no God (vs. 4) says also that God has forgotten to look into his deeds (vs. 11); the *נבל* of Ps. 14 (and 53) is a man who acts as if there were no God to call him to account; these persons are like those of Mal. 3:14 who thought there was no profit in being good. Nor does the polemic

²³ In his *Griechische Philosophie im Alten Testament*, pp. 40-50.

²⁴ A reference in the Psalter to the Essenes is not probable; for, whatever their creed, they were not atheistical, and were in general loyal to the Jewish faith.

in the Psalter against the "proud" refer to the arrogance of philosophical speculation. The insolence that speaks "great things" (Ps. 12:4) shows itself in oppression of the poor (vs. 6); the arrogant of Ps. 75:4-7 are those who fancy that their power resides in themselves without regard to man or God; and whatever the *גְּדִלּוֹת* and *נִפְלְאוֹת* with which the author of Ps. 131 declines to occupy himself, the concluding exhortation, "Oh Israel, hope in Yahweh," points rather to social and political than to philosophical difficulties. The Job passages cited by Friedländer are to be understood in a similar way: the *רָשָׁע* of 15:20-35 who stretches out his hand against God and defies the Almighty (vs. 25) is an *עֲרִיץ* who conceives mischief and brings forth iniquity; the picture in Job, chap. 21 and 22:13-17 is like that in Ps. 10, of prosperous and unscrupulous wicked men, and their bidding adieu to God with the conviction that there is no profit in serving him (21:14 f.; 22:17) is moral recklessness and not speculative atheism. Friedländer finds the key to all these passages in Ben-Sira 3:17-25, in which men are warned not to seek things too high and too hard for them, not to occupy themselves with mysteries. In vs. 19 (found in א^a, but not in B) the Greek has *μυστήρια*, and the Heb. *לַעֲנוּרִים יִגְלֶה סוֹדוֹ*; in vs. 22: *οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν σοι χρεία τῶν κρυπτῶν*; *וְאִין לך עֵסֶק בְּנִסְתָּרוֹת*. The meaning of these Hebrew terms is fixed in Old Testament usage (which Ben-Sira, as a rule, follows): *סֹד*, used of God, in his intimate, friendly association, which involves his favor (Job 29:4 f.; Ps. 25:14; Prov. 3:32); *נִסְתָּרוֹת* are his secret designs as contrasted with his announced commands (Deut. 29:28; cf. Prov. 25:2). His "secret" is revealed to the pious (vs. 19); as to the hidden things not revealed by God, it is well not to concern one's self with them, but (vs. 22) to do what is commanded. The author appears to be dealing with conduct, not with creed—he concludes the paragraph with a reference to the sorrows of a stubborn spirit. Since these verses inculcate humble obedience, the adjoining verses are probably to be interpreted in accordance with this sense. Vss. 23 f.: "do not concern yourself with what is beyond you—you have been shown what is too great for you [or what is above human understanding, or (Friedländer) too many matters of human wisdom]—many men are led astray by their own vain opinions," may, certainly, be supposed to refer to some sort of non-Jewish theosophic doctrine; but it is equally possible (as also the context suggests) to see in them a reference to an emancipated point of view that led a Jew to discard his national customs and adopt foreign ways and ideas. Among these (as was the case in the Greek period) may well have been some philosophical notions concerning the divine—not atheistic or esoteric—but freer than Jewish orthodoxy permitted, and also customs repugnant to Jewish conservative ideas of decency. But, whatever foreign conceptions may be alluded to in this passage, it is not permissible

to deduce from it a definition of the רשע in general, and particularly it is not permissible to carry over such a definition into the Psalter in the face of the evidence in the psalms themselves. There the רשעים are regarded simply as the social or political enemies of the true Jewish people or of individual חסידים.

§ 4

The well-accredited native Israelite myths of the Old Testament (excluding the demons, deities, and heroes of the popular faith) are all genealogical, and are regarded by the Old Testament writers as representing real historical persons and events. Jacob and his sons are as real to the psalmist as Moses and David, and belong to the current construction of the national history. The same thing is true of the foreign myths in Gen., chaps. 1-11; these were sanctioned by long-established opinion, and have become thoroughly Hebraized. The case may be supposed to be different with the dragon figures Rahab and Leviathan that appear in Job and Isaiah and in the Psalter (74:13 f.; 89:11, and possibly 104:26). These came in comparatively late (they do not appear before the sixth century²⁵) and differ from the native mythical figures in being cosmogonic. It is, perhaps, not possible to determine whether or not they are regarded by the psalmists as historically real. It is possible that they are employed in the way of literary allusion, as Ezek. 32:2 may perhaps be understood. Yet the way in which they are introduced makes on the reader the impression that they are considered as historical. In Ps. 74, for example (where the context shows that the reference is not to the exodus but to a cosmogonic event), the crushing of dragons (and leviathan) is spoken of along with the establishment of day and night and the seasons as the work of God, and in 89:11 the breaking-up of Rahab is put in the same category with the creation of heaven and earth. Nor is there anything in the Hebrew thought of the time to make a realistic conception of such events by the psalmists improbable. The mysterious remote past offered room for strange beings and histories, no natural history of creation was known, and the best current view of Yahweh did not exclude other powers in the extra-human world. Probably the psalmists

²⁵ See note 12, p. 32.

held the cosmogonic dragons to be a part of the history of the beginning of things, and wove them into their conception of the activity of the God of Israel. They are introduced simply to illustrate his power: they were his enemies and he destroyed them. No moral quality is ascribed to them, and there is no symbolic interpretation of the stories nor any recognition of their poetical character. They are treated baldly as historical facts, and have no moral or religious or poetic value. In Ps. 91:6 (and possibly in vs. 5) there seems to be reference to demons of darkness and noon; it is not clear whether these are native, but, native or foreign, they belong to the lower stratum of religious conceptions, and have nothing to do with the essential thought of the psalm. The same thing is true of the reference, in 121:6, to the hurtful power of the moon; or the writer may have in mind, not demons, but merely a supposed fact of hygienic experience. In 19:5, where the sun is compared to a bridegroom and an athlete, it is hardly necessary to see an allusion to the sun-god; the comparison may well be a bit of poetical imagery.

Foreign deities are recognized in the Psalter as existing, and are variously treated. So far as regards idols (עצבים), these are ridiculed (115:4-8; 135:15-18) in the vein of Isa. 40:18 f.; 41:6f.; 44:9-17 (cf. the different tone in Hab. 2:18 f.). The gods also in a couple of passages (96:5; 97:7) are contemptuously dismissed as worthless (אלילים), incapable of helping their worshippers; in 97:7, while the parallelism appears to identify the אלילים with פסל, they seem also to be spoken of as אלהים.²⁶ In general in the Psalter, as in the prophets, a distinction is made between gods and their images; the latter are treated as obviously absurd, the former are regarded as beings to be reckoned with. Part of the glory ascribed to Yahweh is his superiority to other deities (86:8; 95:3; 96:4; 97:9; 136:2, and probably 113:4 by emending גרים into אלהים—the emendation is suggested by the context: “his glory is above the heavens,” and “who [that is, among the gods] is like to Yahweh?” as well as by the similarity in form to 97:7—probably an editor thought it desirable to bring

²⁶ Cf. Sab. אלאל referred to in the BDB lexicon, and Professor A. T. Clay's suggestion (*American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XXIII, 269 ff.) that the Hebrew word may be the Babylonian אליל (אנליל), the name of the god of Nippur.

the idea down to the sphere of visible and practical relations, as in 96:7 *מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים* has been substituted for the *בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים* of 29:1). The same conception of Yahweh's superiority to other gods is found in Ex. 15:11; Mic. 7:18; Isa. 41:21–24; 43:9; in these passages his superiority is demonstrated by his great deeds, in the psalms it is taken for granted. The gods, however, are believed to exist and to form part of a great extra-human society. They are exhorted or declared to worship Yahweh (97:7, if the text be correct)—a noteworthy conception of governmental unity in the divine world, to be compared with the prediction (Isa. 24:21 ff.) that Yahweh will punish the hostile heavenly Powers, and with the references, cited above, to his dealing with the great dragon beings. This demand for unity in the universe is a step toward monotheism, and 97:7 seems even to contain the idea of unity of thought, a conversion of the gods to right religious practice, a sort of *ἀποκατάστασις* on the largest scale. Elsewhere in the Psalter foreign gods appear to be brought into intimate social relations with men. In 58:2 (reading *אֱלֹהִים* for the *אֱלֹהִים*²⁷ of the Masoretic text) they are unjust judges of men, dealing out violence on the earth. Psalm 82 gives a definite picture of a heavenly assembly—a judicial inquiry into the administration of human affairs. God (that is, the God of Israel) presides—around or before him stand the inferior deities, each of whom has his function as divine head of some non-Jewish people (so it may be inferred from vs. 8). These are charged with injustice, and are to be punished—though they are in truth *אֱלֹהִים*, *בְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן*, they must die like men. This picture of the government of the world—"divine" judges who are to be put to death by the Supreme Judge—has given rise to doubts as to the text and the meaning. It is proposed to read *בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים* (cf. *בְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן*, 82:7) instead of *אֱלֹהִים* and *אֱלֹהִים*; but in that case the expression must be understood in a sense different from that of the earlier books, and the beings referred to must be identifiable with the gentile deities who were supposed to be subject to death (82:8).²⁸ It is held by

²⁷ The word is by some deleted, but the metre calls for a word here. Others point *אֱלֹהִים* (Sept. *ἄφα*), but such an adversative term seems not in place here. On the other hand, the reading *אֱלֹהִים*, = 'gods,' is favored by the apparent contrast with the *בְּנֵי אָדָם* at the end of the verse; and the rendering 'mighty ones' (= rulers) is less probable.

²⁸ See note 13, p. 32.

some scholars that the title **אלהים** is sometimes given in the Old Testament in a serious sense to men, but the passages cited for this view do not support it: in Ex. 21:6 the context shows that it is the household god to whose image or shrine the slave is brought (Sept.: *πρὸς τὸ κριτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ*); in Ex. 22:7, 8, two cases are mentioned in which, the ordinary judges not being able to decide (and to them other cases are tacitly referred in the code), the matter is left to God (to be settled by oath or by the sacred lot or in some similar way—cf. Num. 5:21, I Sam. 2:25); Ex. 22:27 distinguishes between **אלהים** (Sept. *θεὸς*) and the human **נשיא** (cursing a god was not uncommon, see I Sam. 3:13, Sept., I Kings 21:10, Isa. 8:21, Job 1:5; 2:9, Lev. 24:15); the text of Judg. 5:8 is doubtful, and in any case there is no good ground for rendering **אלהים** 'judges;' the Sept. in Ps. 138:1 has *ἀγγέλων*, which is an incorrect translation, but shows that the translators did not think of men in the connection (so in Ps. 8:6 *ἀγγέλους* for **אלהים**). It may be assumed that there is no authority from usage for taking **אלהים** (or **אלים**) in a serious sense as 'judges' or 'rulers,' whether native or foreign. Some critics, however, suppose that the title may be given to men sarcastically. Ewald (followed by Olshausen) thinks the reference in Pss. 58, 82 is to gentile judges whom the poet calls "gods" after the gentile fashion, but in his own sarcastic sense; Duhm sees in the passages an attack on the proud Hasmonean priest-princes whom their hellenizing flatterers may have affected to consider divine. The objection to this interpretation (in addition to what is said above) is that the text gives no hint of sarcasm—the tone of 58 and 82 is serious (82 is so taken in John 10:34 f.), and the expression, "I say, ye are gods," can hardly be understood to be employed derisively. However strange this recognition of foreign deities may appear, the Old Testament usage seems decisive for the interpretation of the **אלהים** and **אלים** of the two psalms in question as gentile gods, treated as unjust (because their people are suffering) and as mortal. The conception that every people has its own god to whom it looks for protection, appears in the older books (Judg. 11:24; cf. I Sam. 26:19) in crude form; in the psalms above cited the gods belong to an organized body,

and take part in human life in a modern human way. The variety of views expressed in the Psalter respecting gentile deities indicates that the Jews of the later period were much exercised about these beings; it was impossible to deny their existence, and the only course left for pious thought was to weave them into the recognized scheme of the divine government of the world, under the headship of Yahweh. The same method had already been adopted in the treatment of the old divine beings who appear in the Old Testament as angels, seraphs, cherubs, and sons of the Elohim. To the psalmists, as to Socrates, the conception of the co-existence of the supreme God and the subordinate gods seems not to have been a difficult one; and while it rendered their monotheism theoretically impure, left it practically intact.

NOTES

NOTE 12. OLD TESTAMENT DRAGONS

The earliest definite mentions in the Old Testament of the mythical dragon are found in Isa. 51:9; 27:1; Am. 9:3; Job 7:12; the reference in Ezek. 29:3; 32:2 (where read רִנִּי) is doubtful, but the context rather points to the crocodile, a sacred and distinctive animal, which the prophet names as the symbol of Egypt. As the cosmogonic figures are doubtless of Babylonian origin, and taken from the Babylonian cosmogonic poems or current beliefs, it seems probable that the history of creation therein contained was accepted by certain Israelite writers so far as was compatible with their conception of Yahweh as creator and supreme ruler. If so, these figures represent the earliest form of the Jewish idea of intermediate agencies between God and the world—an idea destined to be developed in a very fruitful way. The intermediate agency in this case would be hostile, and the conception of its activity would be crude, but it would contain the notion that other powers besides Yahweh were concerned in the formation of the world. Such a conception would not impair seriously the practical Jewish monocratic faith (which never was absolute monotheism), but it would give a certain richness to the idea of God.

NOTE 13. THE בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים

It appears from Ben-Sira 17:17 and Dan. 10:20f. that in the second century B. C. the opinion existed among the Jews that beings of the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים class presided over gentile peoples. According to the Sept. text of Deut. 32:8, the Most High assigned the nations their territories *κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ*, the Heb. being לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (Sept. read בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים). Ben-Sira, citing Deut. 32:8, writes *ἐκάστω ἔθνει κατέστησεν*

ἡγουμένον (unfortunately the Heb. of this verse of Ben-Sira has not yet been found), apparently interpreting the Sept. expression in a general way in the sense that appears in Daniel where the מַלְאָכִים of Israel (Michael) is in the same category with the מַלְאָכִים of Persia and Greece. The two passages, however, differ greatly. The מַלְאָכִים of Daniel are neither angels nor demons in the ordinary senses of these terms—they are celestial princes who manage the affairs of the world, each in the interest of his nation, Yahweh apparently leaving things in their hands; the struggle is between Michael and Gabriel on the one side, and the princes of Persia and Greece on the other. These latter figures appear to be developments of the Satan of Zech., chap. 3, the adversary of Israel, under the influence of the Persian dualistic scheme, and Michael and Gabriel are individuals formed on the model of the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים. Ben-Sira has nothing of this elaborate organization of the celestial world, only a simple ἡγουμένον for each nation. The אֱלֹהִים of Ps. 82 are very different figures from the מַלְאָכִים of Daniel: they are not celestial magnates conducting international affairs, but quiet divine rulers whose function it is to attend each to the well-being of his own people. The difference between them and the figures of Gen., chap. 6, Isa., chap. 6, and Job, chap. 1, is obvious. The psalmist's conception of the realness but inferiority of foreign gods appears to be expressed in Dan. 3:18, and a similar view is ascribed to the king (3:28 f.). The persistence of such opinions centuries later (I Cor. 10:19 ff.) makes the representations in the Psalter intelligible.